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ABSTRACT

The history of lexicography in Vietnam is chronicled from early Chinese and missionary scholarship through the colonial period (1884-1946), the war years (1946-1954), the partition period (1954-1975), and the post-1975 period. The evolution of romanization, political-linguistic influences, native scholarship in lexicography, and dictionary types are discussed, and successive tendencies in monolingual and multilingual dictionary development are highlighted. (MSE)

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VIETNAMESE LEXICOGRAPHY

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0. This paper traces the history of lexicography in Vietnam and points out its successive tendencies both in monolingual and bilingual or multilingual modes through the traditional period, the colonial period, the independence period, the partition period and the post-1975 period.

1. **The Missionary Period.** The first time frame considered covers lexicographical work based on Chinese scholarship, followed by contributions from Western missionaries serving in the kingdom that later became the major state in French Indochina.. In traditional Vietnam, when the learning of Chinese classics dominated the intellectual scene, schoolchildren were taught basic written Chinese by mears of locally-authored texts such as The Book of 1,000 Characters (*Nhất thiên tự*), The Book of 3,000 Characters (*Tam Thiên Tự*), The Book of 5,000 Characters (*Ngũ thiên tự*), etc., all of which are glossaries from Chinese to Vietnamese. These volumes use verse as mnemonic devices to provide native equivalents of Chinese lexemes in the so-called Sino-Vietnamese pronunciation with the words listed notionally in the manner of thesauri and the native terms transcribed in the demotic script called *nôm*, i.e. the southern script, as opposed to written Chinese, referred to as the scholars' writing system [Nguyen Dinh-Hoa 1981].

As the product of Vietnamese romanization called *quốc-ngữ*--an international and collective undertaking--made its shy appearance in the 17th century, Western missionaries from Portugal, Italy and France began to compile bilingual dictionaries going from Vietnamese to Latin and from Latin to Vietnamese, and used them to facilitate their religious purpose of converting the native population to Christianity. The period from 1651 to 1884 was marked by the epoch-making pioneer efforts of Father Alexandre de Rhodes (1591-1660), who in addition to writing a Latin-Vietnamese Catechism, authored a trilingual volume, *Dictionarium Annamiticum Lusitanum et Latinum*. This was truly the first dictionary printed in the Roman script: published in Rome in 1651 it gives some 8,000 Vietnamese entries with glosses in Portuguese and Latin. De Rhodes, who was able, within a few months of his arrival in 1624, to preach in Vietnamese, was inspired by two earlier works, since extinct, a Vietnamese-Portuguese dictionary and a Portuguese-Vietnamese dictionary authored respectively by Gasparal de Amoral and Antoine Barbosa. The De Rhodes trilingual dictionary is important for two reasons: it includes a *Brief Declaratio* on Vietnamese grammar, and it records among other things some consonant clusters */bl- ml- mnh- tl-/* that reflect the pronunciation of the time, thus constituting a valuable document in historical linguistics [Nguyen 1986a,b; Gregerson 1969].

Besides, Alexandre de Rhodes' role as codifier of the novel script used to transcribe the spoken language was later capably emulated by several generations of Catholic priests, always with the intent to perfect a convenient and effective tool needed for the evangelization of the country. Among those there was even the Bishop of Adran, Msgr Pigneau de Béhaine, upon whose work Bishop Taberd later built his excellent bidirectional Vietnamese-Latin and Latin-Vietnamese dictionary (1838) [Nguyen 1987], which mirrored the changes taking place in the Vietnamese language in the second half of the 17th century and in the 18th century, and which served as the foundation of a later work by Reverend Theurel (1877).

Legrand de la Liraye's *Dictionnaire élémentaire annamite-francais* (1868) appears to be

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the first work going from Vietnamese to French, and in 1880 Father Ravier published his *Dictionarium Latino-Annamiticum,* on which P. Corbel based his *Lexique Annamite-Latin.*

2. **The Colonial Period.** Following the French conquest, completed with the capture of Hanoi in 1884, as the colonial administration encouraged both the teaching of French in local schools and the learning of Vietnamese by its civilian officials, military officers, police officers, clerks and teachers, there occurred an accelerated production of dictionaries going in both directions, with those volumes going from Vietnamese (then called *annamite*) to French outnumbering those going from French to Vietnamese.

Petrus Trương Vĩnh-Ký, a prolific polyglot native scholar, wrote a *Petit Dictionnaire Francais-Annamite* (1887), one of the earliest bilingual dictionaries, to be followed by several excellent works such as *Vocabulaire Annamite-Francais* (1893) and *Dictionnaire Annamite-Francais* (1898) by J. F. M. Génibrel, *Dictionnaire Franco-Tonkinois illustré* (1898) and *Petit Dictionnaire Annamite-Francais* (1901) by P. G. Vallot, a two-volume *Dictionnaire Annamite-Francais* by Jean Bonet (1899-1901), *Dictionnaire Francais-Annamite* (1919) and *Dictionnaire Annamite-Francais* (1922) by P. Barbier, and *Nouveau Dictionnaire Francais-Annamite* by P. Masseron (1922), etc.

Génibrel's is truly a monument of scholarship to which he devoted fourteen years of patient research, aided by "an excellent native scholar." It immediately distinguished itself by lexicographic wealth (it had names for the flora and fauna of Indochina) as well as by the choice and variety of illustrative examples (taken sometimes from the Four Books of China) and their precise French equivalents. Even today this dictionary proves to be immensely useful since like Bonet's and Paulus Cua's it provides the demotic *nôm* characters for all Vietnamese entrywords.

Bonet's two-volume Vietnamese-French dictionary reflected both the official language and the "langue vulgaire" of the country at the beginning of the colonial administration. The author provided in Volume One a grammatical sketch, and in the second volume an appendix on the political and administrative divisions of the Annamite Empire, of Tonkin and of Cochinchina. Beside a table of 214 radicals accompanied by their Vietnamese pronunciation in Tonkinese, Annamese and Cochinchinese, and French translations, Bonet's work has the distinct feature of listing entries beginning with the letter *đ* ("barred d") before those beginning with the /z/ sound, spelled with plain *d.* Of course the inclusion of a *nôm* character or a *Han* character next to each entry helps the identification of numerous homophonous words in the language.

Bonet's dictionary, first made known at the International Congress of Orientalists held in Paris in September 1897, was meant to be useful to "our future functionaries in Indochina," but also to make it easy for young Vietnamese to learn the French language. "As more Vietnamese know French," he wrote in his Preface, "the task of our administrators will be further simplified, and if the use of our language could one day become generalized among the native inhabitants of our beautiful colonies in the Far East, our civilization and our laws will be better understood and better received." [1899: iii]. "It is through exchanges of ideas more than by force and violence that nationalities learn more surely to know one another, to appreciate one another, and to melt together indissolubly," the French lexicographer concluded.

A dictionary compiled in the missionary tradition is *Dictionnaire annamite-chinois-francais* (1937) by Reverend Gustave Huế. As the title indicates, it included only Chinese characters, but the author had difficulties with his printer in getting the work published. Huế praised the conciseness, suppleness and flavorsomeness of the Vietnamese language, which reminded him of La Fontaine, and he emphasized that "it is not the Vietnamese language that is poor, but rather its disparagers who are 'poor in Vietnamese'." [Hue 1937: 4]

Several works produced in the early decades of this century were authored by native

scholars, for instance a *Vocabulaire Grammatical Franco-Tonkinois* by Đỗ-Thận Hàn-Thái-Dương (1923) and *Le Dictionnaire des Lettres* by Vũ Đình Hải and Eugène Conti (1928).

The policy of linguistic assimilation by the French not only did not succeed, but unexpectedly led to reactions that were conducive to the development of the Vietnamese language: as a new press in the vernacular heralded by the two reviews *Nam-phong* and *Đông-dương Tạp-chí* contributed to the dissemination of knowledge and as political pamphlets, translations and textbooks also began to appear in increasing numbers, earlier dictionaries failed to fill the needs of Western-oriented intellectuals. Thus Cordier's *Dictionnaire annamite-francais* (1930) had to be followed by a supplement two years later, after Father Gustave Huế contributed a *Petit passe-partout de la presse indigène* in 1931.

In order to keep up with the newly enriched and cultivated language and also to assist in the learning of Western languages, modern bilingual dictionaries had to be compiled. George Cordier, the French scholar who wrote several books on Vietnamese literature as well, deserves ample credit for that excellent Vietnamese-French volume. Although some of his translations lacked precision and a number of currently used expressions were omitted from his corpus, it was "*de beaucoup l'oeuvre la plus considérable parue sur la langue annamite*" (Nguyễn Văn Tố 1930: 434)

Three native scholars with the same family name brought forth their contributions in due time: the late sinologist Đào Duy Anh, author of among other works an excellent French-Vietnamese dictionary (1936), in which Chinese characters are provided for those Vietnamese equivalents that are loan compounds, Đào Văn Tập, who produced the well known French-Vietnamese and Vietnamese-French pair (1950), and the late Đào Đăng Vỹ, whose French-Vietnamese volume (1952) distinguished itself by its accuracy and thoroughness. Đào Duy Anh meant his French-Vietnamese volume to be a supplement to his *Hán-Việt từ-điển*, a list of Chinese-borrowed words and expressions issued in 1932. Đào Văn Tập's more selective corpus included only those Sino-Vietnamese terms that had been thoroughly integrated into the recipient language, and Đào Đăng Vỹ later even tried to publish an encyclopedic dictionary, of which only three volumes had appeared in print (1960-61).

Next to the bilingual volumes, which usually involve either French or Chinese or another Western or Asian language, a second category included those monolingual dictionaries which aim at standardizing the native language through meaning discriminations as well as clarifications of synonyms and antonyms and even explanations of literary allusions used in works of poetry and prose, for example, *Văn-liệu Từ-điển* by Long-điền Nguyễn Văn Minh (1941).

A third category, that of spelling dictionaries, comprises a dozen or so volumes by Nguyễn Duyên Niên (volumes 1-2, 1933-34), Bửu Cân, Ngô Văn Lương and Ưng Trung (1949), Đào Văn Hội (1950), Nguyễn Văn Hoài (1951), Nguyễn Duyên Niên (vol.3, 1951), Lê Văn Hoè (1952), etc. By far the most scholarly of those is Lê Ngọc-Trụ's *Việt-ngữ chánh-tả tự-vị* (1959), which won a literary prize in South Vietnam in 1961 and was reissued in a revised edition in 1973.

The fourth group consists of what can be called "cultural dictionaries" since they all include lexemes and graphemes borrowed from Chinese, a language often considered the Latin of Vietnam, having served for centuries as the language of education and government at least in its written forms (Nguyen Dinh-Hoa 1987).

The most popular of those dictionaries of Sino-Vietnamese *(Hán-Việt)*, i.e. Chinese loanwords pronounced in Vietnamese, is *Hán-Việt từ-điển* by Đào Duy Anh, the sinologist-lexicographer mentioned above, who is indeed better known by it (1932) than by his French-Vietnamese dictionary of 1936. The two parts of his copious listing record 40,000 compounds printed in the *quốc-ngữ* script and derived from 5,000 individual characters. It is truly a

thesaurus of Chinese loanwords, with some definitions also accompanied by French equivalents.

In this important compendium, which has served generations of teachers and students of all political shades, all the four-syllable compounds follow Chinese syntax: for instance, the entry *kinh-tế* 'economy' is followed by *kinh-tế chiến-tranh* 'guerre économique,' *kinh-tế chính-sách* 'politique économique,' etc. in contrast with the same compounds appearing in the Vietnamese word order: *chiến-tranh kinh-tế, chính-sách kinh-tế,* etc.

Its good feature remains the inclusion of Chinese characters next to *quốc-ngữ* spellings, which helps the discrimination of homonyms. Volume 1, from A to Z (571 pages), covers 2,644 characters listed by the number of strokes on pages 572-588, and the Character Index of Volume 2, from N to X (588 pages), occupies Pages 589-605.

Several authors quickly emulated the pioneer lexicographer: Nguyễn Trần Mô contributed *Nam-Hoa tự-điển* (1940), Hoàng Thúc Trâm *Hán-Việt tân-tự-điển* (1939), whereas Bửu Cân, a scholar in Hue, wrote *Hán-Việt thành-ngữ, Lexique des expressions sino-vietnamiennes usuelles* (1937, reprinted in 1971). In the latter work, thirteen thousand binomial expressions are listed under their headwords, followed by French equivalents and citations from about 180 literary sources. As far as coverage is concerned, the *Hán-Việt từ-điển* by Nguyễn Văn Khôn (1960) complements the volume by Đào Duy Anh, since both list entries in romanization.

The most valuable dictionary of Sino-Vietnamese by far is the one authored in 1942 by The Venerable Thiều-Chửu, a learned Buddhist monk: entitled *Hán-Việt tự-điển*, i.e., a "dictionary of characters,"--as opposed to Đào Duy Anh's "dictionary of words and expressions"--it resembles a regular dictionary of Chinese in that it lists Chinese graphs by radicals and the number of strokes. In the Preface of this landmark work of scholarship, Monk Thiều-Chửu deplored that Han, i.e. Chinese, studies in Vietnam were losing ground, and that "only through Buddhist studies perhaps some parts could be preserved." He stated his objective as helping those people already able to read Buddhist scriptures understand individual characters, which could serve as "a foundation on which to rebuild the resplendent monument of Confucianism." (1942: iii-v) In addition to a 817-page main corpus, this masterpiece also contains a 92-page Index, where the words, especially homophonous words, are cross-referenced to their corresponding characters.

3. **The War Years.** Throughout the French-Vietnamese hostilities, started in December 1946 and terminated only by the Geneva Armistice Agreements of 1954, there slowly developed a crying need for the elaboration and grooming of the national language: as it was prepared--by the French-educated intelligentsia--to replace French as the medium of instruction at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education, a scientific and technical terminology had to be invented by teachers engaged in the translation and adaptation of textbook materials. It was in this wartime context at home that Minh-Tân, a publishing house in Paris, had the initiative of reprinting the two seminal works by Đào Duy Anh, his French-Vietnamese dictionary and his dictionary of Sino-Vietnamese words and expressions. The 1950 reprint edition of the latter work reproduced a hand-written "open letter" dated 1949 and addressed to the author by Nguyễn Ngọc Bích, the person in charge of the Paris publishing concern. The letter was meant to inform Đào Duy Anh, then living in the *maquis* deep in the mountains of Tonkin, about the need to have the book reprinted for the common good and at the same time to assure the respected sinologist that his copyright would be fully protected.

4. **The Partition Period.**

(A) **The dictionaries of Nôm characters.** On the other hand the primers (mentioned in Section 1) that present both the Chinese graphs and the Vietnamese (*nôm*) characters that represent the vernacular glosses, had thus served as practical textbooks for generations. Analytic articles in journals and reviews often discussed the novel script which was still used

under the French administration. However, real repertories of those "southern" or demotic characters started appearing only in the 1960s as a result of academic courses offered at the University of Saigon Faculty of Letters: first the mimeographed list by Trần Đức Rật (1961?) and that compiled by Vũ Văn Kính and Nguyễn Văn Khánh (1970) as classroom materials, then a more systematic *Collection of Chữ Nôm Scripts* gathered by Chingho Chen, then a visiting professor at the universities of Saigon and Hue, and published at Keio University in Japan in 1970. These useful compilations served scholars well until two printed dictionaries successively appeared in the 1970s, one in Saigon and the other in Hanoi.

The former volume, *Tự-điển chữ nôm* (1971) by Nguyễn Quang Xỹ and Vũ Văn Kính, was called "the first dictionary of *nôm* characters, which could mark a meaningful step forward by modern-minded young Vietnamese intellectuals in the task of studying the national culture," according to Professor Bửu Cầm, an authority on the *nôm* script, who contributed the Preface (p. vi). The first part, which runs for 102 pages, contains about 10,000 characters written with one to thirty-two strokes and is followed by cross-references from *quốc-ngữ* spellings to the characters. It is worth noting that the 100-page body of this dictionary, published by the Textbook Service in Saigon, has been reproduced in the back matter of the Vietnamese-German dictionary by Professor Otto Karow (*Từ-điển Việt-Đức, Vietnamesisch-Deutsches Worterbuch*), published in Wiesbaden in 1972. The other dictionary, compiled under the auspices of the Institute of Linguistics and published in Hanoi in 1976, bears a modest title: *Bảng tra chữ nôm* (1976) gives 8,187 *nôm* characters "which are used to transcribe 12,000 syllables commonly occurring either as words or as word constituents in the language" (Introduction, p. 6). This "finder list" of characters has been culled from fifteen literary works by a team of linguists in consultation with traditionally trained senior scholars. The first part of the book is designed to help find the readings of characters arranged by the number of strokes, and with the help of the second part, which is an index of romanized spellings, users can look up the shape of individual characters. Although neither volume gives a complete inventory of *nôm* characters used in various literary compositions, including popular narratives in verse, they both are effective research tools and actually complement each other.

(B) **The monolingual dictionaries.** The earliest monolingual dictionary of modern times is *Việt-nam tự-điển*, compiled by the Committee on Literature of Hội Khai-trí Tiến-đức, the society devoted to "the intellectual and moral advancement of the people" (1931). But actually some decades before, Huỳnh-Tịnh (Paulus) Của, a French-educated scholar, had already produced a monumental work: *Đại-Nam quấc-âm tự-vị, Dictionnaire de la language nationale du Đại-Nam* (1895-1896). Huỳnh-Tịnh had meant at first to compile a Vietnamese-French dictionary, but after his would-be collaborators had left Cochinchina for the north, the work was to be simply a monolingual dictionary designed to reflect the southern dialect with a large number of Cambodian and Fukien or Chiuchow loanwords. This early corpus is extremely useful to scholars of classical literature since each entry is accompanied by either a *nôm*, i.e. demotic, character or a Chinese character used in the transcription of pertinent literary sources, and today this precious two-volume work remains a reliable research tool.

As for the cooperative efforts of the scholars in the Khai-trí Tiến-đức Society, they resulted in a dictionary that gives clear and succinct definitions of both Sino-Vietnamese and Vietnamese lexemes--the former accompanied by corresponding Chinese characters--and also systematically provides citations either in the form of idiomatic collocations or as used in popular works of prose or poetry. As it first appeared in fascicles beginning in 1931 it was favorably reviewed for its scholarly nature, but native scholars also pointed out omissions as well as vague definitions.

Later works in the monolingual mode include dictionaries by Đào Văn Tập (1951) and by Thanh-Nghị (1952). These two authors judiciously tried to record the daily common parlance instead of giving words and expressions that are either deadwood or found only in works of classical literature, and therefore unfamiliar to the average user. Both have been in due time surpassed by more recent works: *Việt-nam từ-điển* by Lê Văn Đức, published in Saigon in 1970,

and *Từ-điển tiếng Việt* by Văn-Tân and others, published in Hanoi in 1959 and revised in 1977. There is a more ambitious work undertaken under the auspices of the Vietnam Social Sciences Commission (Uỷ-ban Khoa-học Xã-hội Việt-nam) in Hanoi, but thus far only the first volume of *Từ-điển tiếng Việt phổ-thông* (1975) covering the letters A to C has been published.

(C) **The bilingual dictionaries.** A work that deserves particular mention is another Vietnamese-Chinese-French dictionary. a *magnum opus* by Reverend Eugène Gouin: his *Dictionnaire Vietnamien-Chinois-Francais* (1957) had first been constructed during his nearly six years of "forced leisure" spent in a Vietminh prison camp from 1946 to 1952. Actually pursuing a labor of love for almost ten years, first to occupy his monotonous days in jail and "as a defense against dispair and neurasthenia," the French priest worked from Gustave Huế's corrected and revised personal copy of the latter's own dictionary to produce a rather complete corpus followed by Chinese and French equivalents. An excellent print job, this large format dictionary will long remain a model of multilingual lexicography involving at least two Asian languages and a Western language.

Bilingual dictionaries using another language than French as source language or target language are fairly late comers. To begin with, all those dictionaries that list Chinese loanwords and thus serve as etymological sources, should be distinguished from truly bilingual dictionaries going from Chinese to Vietnamese or vice versa. One of these modern Vietnamese-Chinese volumes is *Việt-Hán tự-điển tối-tân* (Saigon 1961) by Hoàng Minh Xuân and others. It contains over seventy thousand Vietnamese entries, including monomorphemic words, compounds and phrases, all accompanied by Chinese equivalents. This 947-page "most modern" bilingual volume supplies some encyclopedic back matter consisting of an Appendix which lists names of provinces and cities in South Vietnam, abbreviations in English-Chinese-Vietnamese, measures, and names of currency units of various countries. Five years later, a 1,371-page similar work entitled *Từ-điển Việt-Hán* by Hà-Thành and others was published in Beijing. This Chinese-produced work has six appendices, including a Chinese-Vietnamese index, a list of international place names, a list of names of provinces and districts in Viet-nam, a chronology of Vietnamese and Chinese dynasties, a list of chemical elements, a list of measures, and a description of Vietnamese tones. Since these two dictionaries are identical in terms of macro- and microstructure, it is difficult to tell which of the two groups of editors had plagiarized the other. At any rate, the corpus of the one published in Beijing was found good enough for Joint Publications Research Service, a U.S. government agency, to translate the Chinese glosses into English, resulting in a two-volume *Vietnamese-English Dictionary* (JPRS 1966), in which the 65,000 terms represent "more modern usage than those in currently available dictionaries, particularly terms used in North Vietnamese publications" (page a).

Although English has been taught at the secondary level as a second foreign language--next to Vietnamese in French-medium lycées of the colonial period, and then next to French since 1945--dictionaries involving English did not appear until after World War II. The earliest volume was an *Annamese-English Dictionary* with an English-Annamese index, compiled for the Vietnamese language course organized by Professor Murray B. Emeneau under the Army Specialized Training Program. The co-author of this small dittoed dictionary was Diether von den Steinen, and the Index was based on work by John Sherry. This pocket-size book of 279 pages was very useful to the GIs who were taking the course in the 1940's at the universities of Wisconsin and California, according to Professor Emeneau himself, Mr. Lý Đức Lâm, his informant, and several members of the wartime language class.

Several works published since cultural contacts with British and Americans advisers and teachers were developed in the southern half of the country in the 1950's are Dr. and Mrs. Lê Văn Hùng 1955 (in Paris), Lê Bá Kông 1955, Nguyễn Văn Khôn 1955, Nguyễn Đình-Hoà 1959, 1967, for Vietnamese-English, and for English-Vietnamese several reprints of Lê Bá Kông and Nguyễn Văn Khôn (some in pirate editions overseas since the spring of 1975), Nguyễn Đình-Hoà 1980, 1983 (in the U.S.), etc. In North Vietnam we have to mention Bùi Phụng's Vietnamese-English dictionary (1978) and Đặng Chấn Liêu & Bùi Y's English-Vietnamese

dictionary (1976) as well as a 65,000-entry volume sponsored by the Viện Ngôn-ngữ-học (Institute of Linguistics) in 1975. This important English to Vietnamese work, a rigorous 1959-page compilation with a consistent format, was meant to serve a wider audience than the high school and college population. Its coverage is extensive, and usage is primarily British although a number of Americanisms is noted. While derivatives are fairly completely listed, there are easily noticeable omissions: *backpack, bagel, berserk, bikini, blackjack, black lung, bloodmobile, blue jeans, boll wevil, bologna, charisma, citizenry, claustrophobia, copilot, decaffeinated, decal, defrost, defuse, dehumidify, extrasensory, extrovert, hairpiece, hallucinogen, hang-up, headcheese, homesite, hometown, headroom, heist, helipad, heterosexual, hubcap,* etc. One does not find either *expressway, freeway,* or *tollway,* but only *speedway* and *turnpike,* the latter translated as "big road." The dictionary user cannot help feeling that these omissions, as well as mistaken glosses (for such simple items as *apple cart, bathing trunks, bachelor of arts, driveway, elementary school, measles, fennel,* etc.), are due to the compilers' unfamiliarity with American and British foodstuffs, articles of clothing, gadgets, institutions, etc. Furthermore not enough attention is given to grammatical information or to various collocations of English lexemes.

It is interesting to note that the new illustrated dictionary of Vietnamese, *Việt-Nam Tân-từ-điển minh-hoạ* by Thanh-Nghị, though basically a monolingual dictionary incorporating many newly accepted words of politics, economics, philosophy and sciences, also gives French or English equivalents and even nearly 2,000 Buddhist terms with equivalents in Sanskrit.

Other languages involved are German, Russian, Norwegian, Esperanto, Japanese, Pali, Khmer, Thai, Tày-Nùng, with the Summer Institute of Linguistics contributing a large number of word lists and glossaries for minority languages of the highlands, including a "tentative" edition of a Mường-Vietnamese-English dictionary by Milton and Muriel Barker (1975), which presents valuable materials on Mường, the archaic sister language of Vietnamese.

(D) **The scientific and technical dictionaries.** Technical glossaries started appearing early in the 1940's, initially through efforts of individual science teachers and journalists--even when the medium of instruction was still the French language--then later through concerted efforts of educational leaders working around colleges and universities and institutionalized bodies charged with this aspect of language planning and language treatment [Nguyen Dinh-Hoa 1977]. As an increasingly wealthy jargon in each branch of the social and natural sciences is elaborated, the innovative processes by Vietnamese intellectuals regardless of their political leanings have helped the collective production of a large number of glossaries and dictionaries. Ever since Professor Hoàng Xuân-Hãn, a French-trained mathematician-historian-philologist, published his *Danh-từ khoa-học*, *Vocabulaire Scientifique,* a "collection of terms denoting scientific ideas [in math, physics, chemistry, mechanics and astronomy] and based on French" (Hoang 1948: vii), his colleagues and students have continued a highly productive terminological task thrust on them when Vietnamese was called upon in 1945 to serve as the medium of instruction at all three levels of national education. During the partition, 1954-75, teachers in both halves of the country patiently competed in the compilation of a large number of technical dictionaries in the natural and social sciences, using native words as well as translations and transliterations (Nguyen Dinh-Hoa 1981 and 1985), thus contributing to the standardization and stabilization of scientific and technical jargon in every discipline.

5. **Conclusion.** In 1984, a new institute within the Social Sciences Commission started to publish *Tri-thức Bách-khoa*, a finely edited journal which contains technical discussions as well as draft entries for two planned works: a "small-size" encyclopedic dictionary of Vietnamese and an encyclopedia of Vietnam. Sample articles are on Rice, Acupuncture, Energy, Yoga, History of Encyclopedias, Structure of an Encyclopedia, etc. Unfortunately this publication has been discontinued. Despite false starts such as this, linguists, scientists, scholars, writers and journalists both at home and abroad are trying to enhance the purity and clarity of their mother tongue, and lexicographic work in Vietnamese promises to be both rigorous and comprehensive and to constantly improve quantitatively as well as qualitatively.